



Superintendent's Report

October 8, 2026

Our students observed the New Jersey *Week of Respect* this week. We marked the week by celebrating school spirit at both schools. At HES, the Week of Respect was aligned with ICARE, with students wearing their favorite team jersey to "team up against bullying" and learning about empathy. At TMS, the students focused on the schoolwide October theme, *Being a Responsible Citizen*, which is aligned with our Profile of a Closter Learner. Our goal is to teach students to be respectful every week, not just during the *Week of Respect*!

This week, Ms. Smith, Ms. Cipollini, and I attended the Statewide Narcotics Action Plan (SNAP) conference along with three Closter Police Department representatives. This Conference, planned by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, presented information to school leaders and police officers on youth resiliency, combating exploitation, and school security. We received information on collaboration with the county law enforcement, risk mitigation, and supporting overlooked populations to strengthen our community and student safety. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn alongside educators and law enforcement from Bergen County and to bring important strategies back to our schools.

District Goals Update

This month all teachers will engage during morning meeting time in grade-level and department-level conversations focused on building shared language and understanding of the Profile of a Closter Learner rubric. During this month's meeting, teachers will continue reviewing the rubric language and identifying ways in which they see students exhibiting each of the six characteristics. Our school teams are also working diligently on our district goal of implementing the social-emotional learning action plans. At HES, the counselors have launched a simple parent survey to solicit parent feedback on topics for parent-presentations and are starting to deliver lessons in classrooms, in addition to using a weekly video lesson school-wide. At TMS, the counselors have shared the CharacterStrong lesson organization with teachers. At both schools, the counselors are sharing information for parents in the school newsletters, so be sure to read these important updates and engage in conversations with students at home about our social-emotional learning programs.

We held the first meeting of the Innovative Learning Committee on Tuesday, October 6, 2026. The committee was created as a part of our 2026-2027 district goals. The committee of ten began our work to research and evaluation of innovative instructional practices, technologies and environmental and sustainability initiatives. The committee identified five topics that we will research as we explore an initiative that we will recommend for implementation in the 2027-2028 school year: AI literacy for responsible use; career exploration/career-connected learning; Eco-School Initiatives; using school gardens, outdoor classrooms and nature-spaces; and waste reduction/food-waste programs. The committee will meet again in November to share members' research on the various topics. We're off to a great start on this district goal!

Tonight, I present the HIB Self-Assessment for the 2025-2026 school year. Each year, New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights requires every school to complete a self-assessment measuring its efforts to prevent and respond to harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB). The assessment rates schools across eight core areas, including prevention programs, staff training, student instruction, reporting and investigation procedures, and staffing, on a scale of 0 to 78. Our Anti-Bullying Specialists, with input from stakeholders, completed the 2025-2026 assessments, and I am proud to share the results:

- Tenakill Middle School: 78 out of 78
- Hillside Elementary School: 77 out of 78

These scores reflect the daily work of our staff to make sure every student feels safe, respected, and supported at school. Once the NJDOE issues the official school and district grade reports, they will be posted on our district and school websites. Last year's scores are currently available on the [district website](#).

On Monday, October 12, 2026, all Closter Public Schools will follow a half-day schedule for students. That afternoon, our teachers and staff will take part in professional development on suicide prevention and awareness, led by West Bergen Mental Health. This training is required for all New Jersey school staff, and it is also one of the most important ways we prepare staff to care for our students. Our educators are often the first to notice when a child is struggling. This session will strengthen their ability to recognize warning signs, respond with compassion, and connect students and families with the right support. It reflects our commitment to making sure every student and staff member in Closter feels safe and supported.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe October!

Vincent Mc Hale